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MUSIC DIRECTOR ESA-PEKKA SALONEN AND THE SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY OPEN 2023–24 SEASON WITH TWO PERFORMANCES AT DAVIES SYMPHONY HALL, SEPTEMBER 22 & SEPTEMBER 23, 2023

Opening Night Gala and All San Francisco concerts interweave music and technology in a program featuring Richard Strauss’s *Don Juan*; Gustav Mahler’s *Songs of a Wayfarer*, with baritone Simon Keenlyside; Maurice Ravel’s *Boléro*; and Anders Hillborg’s *Rap Notes* with rappers squaring off against artificial intelligence-generated verse, featuring Oakland-based musician Kev Choice, Freestyle Love Supreme’s Anthony Veneziale, and soprano Hila Plitmann

Opening Night Gala concert on September 22 is preceded by a red-carpet welcome with sparkling wine and light bites for all attendees

Two Opening Night Gala dinner packages offer an enhanced experience and are available for purchase via sfsymphony.org/gala; proceeds from the event benefit the SF Symphony’s artistic, education, and community programs

All San Francisco Concert on September 23 welcomes and pays tribute to impactful community groups and nonprofit organizations across the Bay Area

SAN FRANCISCO, CA—Music Director Esa-Pekka Salonen and the San Francisco Symphony launch their 2023–24 season with a celebratory opening weekend featuring the Opening Night Gala concert on September 22 and All San Francisco concert on September 23. Both concerts feature Salonen and the Orchestra in an exhilarating program interweaving music and technology, all highlighted with cutting-edge lighting and video projections

ESA-PEKKA SALONEN, MUSIC DIRECTOR

created by 59 Productions. Richard Strauss's picaresque *Don Juan* opens the program, followed by Gustav Mahler's love-sick *Songs of a Wayfarer*, featuring baritone Simon Keenlyside in his San Francisco Symphony debut. The program also includes Anders Hillborg's *Rap Notes*, featuring rappers squaring off against artificial intelligence-generated verse in a piece highlighting both human creativity and technological prowess. The Symphony is joined by Oakland-based musician, educator, and activist Kev Choice; conceiver and creator of Freestyle Love Supreme Anthony Veneziale (Two-Touch); and soprano Hila Plitmann for these performances. Salonen and the Orchestra close the program with Maurice Ravel's captivating and hypnotic *Boléro*. Concert tickets and dining packages for the Gala are available now via sfsymphony.org.

Co-chaired by Amy Christodoulo and Julie Liegl, the San Francisco Symphony's Opening Night Gala begins at 5:30pm with red carpet arrivals and a preconcert lobby reception for all attendees with complimentary sparkling wine and light bites catered by [Global Gourmet Catering](#). For an elevated experience, patrons have the option to reserve one of two postconcert Gala Dinner packages: The classic seated **Pavilion Dinner** is presented in a stylish tent setting next to Davies Symphony Hall and features a curated dining experience with musical entertainment by DJ Billy Vidal and a special performance by technology and dance ensemble iLuminate. Guests attending the Pavilion Dinner are also invited to a special VIP preconcert reception at 5pm. The lounge-style **Symphony Supper Club** is situated in the sleek nightclub atmosphere of the SoundBox space with mingling, specialty bites, and drinks, alongside live music entertainment by DJ Zita and a performance by iLuminate. The Pavilion Dinner and Symphony Supper Club are both catered by [McCalls Catering](#).

Décor for the tented Pavilion Dinner, Symphony Supper Club, and inside Louise M. Davies Symphony Hall is provided by [Blueprint Studios](#) and plays on the evening's technology theme, with vibrant and colorful sculptural lighting by [Got Light](#), LED displays, and bright, futuristic table settings. Other Opening Night production partners include [Hensley Event Resources](#) and [Event Organizers](#). *Haute Living* is the official Opening Night Gala Magazine Partner.

Proceeds from the Opening Night Gala directly support the Symphony's acclaimed education, community, and artistic programs. This year, purchasers of a Gala Dinner package have the option of making an additional contribution in support of the SF Symphony's 44th annual All San Francisco concert, on September 23. This beloved opening week concert welcomes and pays tribute to many of the impactful community groups and nonprofit organizations across the Bay Area for their invaluable work in enriching our city. For more information and reservations to the gala event, please call Patron Services at 415.503.5351 or visit sfsymphony.org/gala.

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ESA-PEKKA SALONEN LEADS ANNUAL ALL SAN FRANCISCO CONCERT ON SEPTEMBER 23, IN RECOGNITION OF LOCAL COMMUNITY SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

2023 Ellen Magnin Newman Award to be presented to Youth Art Exchange at All San Francisco Concert



ESA-PEKKA SALONEN, MUSIC DIRECTOR

The annual All San Francisco Concert is an essential part of the San Francisco Symphony's opening week celebrations and is dedicated to and presented for the people involved with the Bay Area's nonprofits, social services groups, and community organizations, in recognition of and gratitude for the work these groups do to serve and enrich the lives of Bay Area citizens. Invites are extended to volunteers and employees from a broad range of organizations such as Openhouse, First Exposures, Magic Programs SF, and the Youth Law Center, among many others. This year's All San Francisco Concert on September 23 is co-chaired by Brittany Ford (MAGIC SF, SF Public Defender's Office) and Devi Zinzuvadia (San Francisco Human Rights Commission) and guided by an advisory committee made up of an inspiring and creative group of advisors and collaborators. SF Symphony Life Governor Ellen Magnin Newman, who founded the All San Francisco Concert in conjunction with the opening of Davies Symphony Hall in 1980, serves as honorary chair. The All San Francisco Concert is presented in partnership with the San Francisco Arts Commission. To request an invitation for a community group or nonprofit, email allsf@sfsymphony.org.

In addition to co-chairs Brittany Ford and Devi Zinzuvadia, All San Francisco Committee includes advisory chairs Cynthia Inaba (Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco) and Robert Melton (Commonwealth Club Art Curator/Co-Chair Arts Forum) and committee members Erik Auerbach (First Exposures), Cristina Barron (Tides), Mariah Bozeman (FACES SF), Jennifer Byrd (The Salvation Army), Carrie Cottini (Edible Schoolyard Project), Rodney Earl Jackson Jr. (San Francisco Bay Area Theatre Company), Heather Mathews (Huckleberry Youth Programs), Barbara Ockel (Shipyard Trust for the Arts (STAR)), Ryan Pinter (Stanford University), Eleanor Pollak (San Francisco Symphony), Josué Rojas (SF Artist & Muralist), Kathleen M. Sullivan, Ph.D. (Openhouse), and Selina Weiss (Youth Law Center).

The All San Francisco Concert includes the presentation of the Ellen Magnin Newman Award to honor an outstanding community-based arts organization that strengthens the Bay Area's cultural fabric, serves families and individuals, and creates a more just and equitable society for everyone who lives here. Recipients of the Award are celebrated at the All San Francisco Concert and receive a Symphony concert series subscription for two as well as a cash grant. This year's recipient of the Ellen Magnin Newman Award is **Youth Art Exchange**.

For over twenty years, Youth Art Exchange (YAX) has been a leader in arts education for San Francisco public high school youth. YAX believes experiencing the arts at a pivotal age and developing a strong connection to the arts through learning, creating, and making gives youth tools to express themselves, exchange with others, and shape the world around them. YAX's spaces buzz with the creative energy of artists and youth working together to make art, hang out, and build community—making San Francisco more connected, resilient, and reflective of all those woven in its fabric. YAX works diligently for public high school youth to have equitable access to the arts and spaces to explore who they are, voice who they are becoming, and express what they want to advocate for and contribute to their communities. This fall will mark the opening of its two new art centers in San Francisco, where YAX will extend studio classes and workshops to all ages.

About the San Francisco Symphony

The San Francisco Symphony is widely considered to be among the most artistically adventurous and innovative arts institutions in the United States, celebrated for its artistic excellence, creative performance concepts, active touring, award-winning recordings, and standard-setting education programs. In the 2020–21 season, the San Francisco Symphony welcomed conductor and composer Esa-Pekka Salonen as its twelfth Music Director, embarking on a new vision for the present and future of the orchestral landscape. In their inaugural season together, Esa-Pekka Salonen and the San Francisco Symphony introduced a groundbreaking artistic leadership model anchored by eight Collaborative Partners from a variety of cultural disciplines: Nicholas Britell, Julia Bullock, Claire Chase, Bryce Dessner, Pekka Kuusisto, Nico Muhly, Carol Reiley, and esperanza spalding. This group of visionary artists, thinkers, and doers, along with Salonen and the San Francisco Symphony, have set out to explore and develop new ideas inspired by the Partners' unique areas of expertise, including innovative digital projects, expansive and imaginative performance concepts in a variety of concert formats, commissions of new music, and projects that foster collaboration across artistic and administrative areas.

About the San Francisco Symphony's education and community programs

The San Francisco Symphony provides some of the most extensive education and community programs offered by any American orchestra. The Symphony's free music education experiences engage students in grades 1–12 throughout the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD). Adventures in Music (AIM), one of the longest-running education programs of its kind in the country since its launch in 1988, serves every child in grades 1–5 in San Francisco's public schools and engages more than 21,000 students annually. The Music and Mentors program supports SFUSD's band and orchestra programs in grades 6–12 with professional musicians who coach students weekly, and provides instrument supplies and concert tickets. The Symphony's online educational resources include a variety of digital programs that offer lessons and activities designed to support schools and promote music education at home. To learn more about the Symphony's education programs, visit sfsymphony.org/EducationCommunity.

In addition to the All San Francisco Concert, the San Francisco Symphony has a robust lineup of community programs and events, including Music in the Wards, which brings in-person and virtual performances by SF Symphony musicians to UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital for monthly concerts; the Community Chamber Concerts series, which partners with a broad range of organizations to bring small ensemble concerts to communities across the Bay Area; and Deck the Hall Community Day, an annual holiday concert performed for approximately 2,500 young people in Davies Symphony Hall every December. Each fall, the Symphony celebrates Día de los Muertos, featuring a concert program of traditional and contemporary Latin American music, preceded by a festive array of family-friendly activities. In celebration of Lunar New Year, the Symphony performs an annual concert honoring the musical cultures of East, South, and Southeast Asia. The San Francisco Symphony's Community Ticket Program is designed to provide equitable access to the Orchestra's concerts by providing free tickets to people who work with or are served by nonprofit healthcare, social service, and arts organizations in the San Francisco Bay Area. To learn more about the Symphony's extensive community engagement programs, visit sfsymphony.org/community.

[Click here](#) to access the Online Press Kit, which includes a PDF of this press release, downloadable artist headshots, and photos from past SF Symphony opening week celebrations.

CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

Tickets:

Tickets for concerts at Davies Symphony can be purchased via sfsymphony.org or by calling the San Francisco Symphony Box Office at 415.864.6000.

Location:

Davies Symphony Hall is located at 201 Van Ness Avenue in San Francisco.

Health & Safety Information:

Davies Symphony Hall is currently operating at full audience capacity. Based on the advice of the San Francisco Symphony's Health and Safety Task Force, a face covering and vaccination against COVID-19 are strongly recommended but no longer required for entry into Davies Symphony Hall. These policies are subject to change. Visit sfsymphony.org/safety for the San Francisco Symphony's complete up-to-date health and safety protocols.

SPECIAL EVENT

Opening Night Gala

Friday, September 22, 2023, at 7pm

Esa-Pekka Salonen conductor
Simon Keenlyside baritone
Kev Choice hip-hop artist
Anthony Veneziale freestyle artist
Hila Plitmann soprano
San Francisco Symphony

RICHARD STRAUSS *Don Juan*

GUSTAV MAHLER *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* (Songs of a Wayfarer)

ANDERS HILLBORG *Rap Notes*

MAURICE RAVEL *Boléro*

Event Timeline

Concert-only attendees

5:30pm: Preconcert reception for all ticketholders, including complimentary sparkling wine and light bites

7:00pm: Opening Night Gala Concert

8:30pm: Concert program ends

Pavilion Dinner

5:00pm: Pre-party VIP reception in Davies Symphony Hall lobbies

5:30pm: Preconcert reception for all ticketholders, including complimentary sparkling wine and light bites

7:00pm: Opening Night Gala Concert

8:30pm: Concert program ends. Tented Pavilion Dinner begins.

11:30pm: Opening Night Gala concludes

Symphony Supper Club

5:30pm: Preconcert reception for all ticketholders, including complimentary sparkling wine and light bites

7:00pm: Opening Night Gala Concert

8:30pm: Concert program ends. Symphony Supper Club begins

11:30pm: Opening Night Gala concludes

Tickets:

Concert-only Tickets: \$150–250

Pavilion Dinner: \$2,500–10,000 (Individual tickets)

Symphony Supper Club: \$500–1,000

Concert-only event page: <https://www.sfsymphony.org/Buy-Tickets/2023-24/Opening-Night-Gala>

VIP Dinner Packages event page: [sfsymphony.org/gala](https://www.sfsymphony.org/gala)

SPECIAL EVENT

All San Francisco Concert

Saturday, September 23, 2023, at 7:30pm

Esa-Pekka Salonen conductor

Simon Keenlyside baritone

Kev Choice hip-hop artist

Anthony Veneziale freestyle artist

Hila Plitmann soprano

San Francisco Symphony

RICHARD STRAUSS *Don Juan*

GUSTAV MAHLER *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* (Songs of a Wayfarer)

ANDERS HILLBORG *Rap Notes*

MAURICE RAVEL *Boléro*

This performance for Bay Area nonprofits and community organizations is a representation of our commitment to equitable access to our concerts. To request an invitation for your organization, contact allsf@sfsymphony.org.

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The San Francisco Symphony receives support from more than 9,500 individual donors and 160 partner institutions.

San Francisco Arts Commission is Lead Municipal Partner of the San Francisco Symphony.

Chevron is the inaugural Second Century Partner of the San Francisco Symphony.

Grants for the Arts is a Season Partner of the San Francisco Symphony.

The All San Francisco Concert on September 23 is presented in partnership with the San Francisco Arts Commission.

Haute Living is the official Opening Night Gala Magazine Partner.

The San Francisco Symphony's Official Radio Partner is KDFC, The Bay Area's Radio Home for Classical Music and the Arts.

San Francisco Chronicle is the Official Media Partner of the San Francisco Symphony.

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